Protocol and Template for Designing a Rubric

Individual teachers, teams of teachers, or teachers and students may use the following steps in crafting an effective rubric.

1. **Identify the standard and criteria to be assessed:** These could be for a unit or essential standard. You may want to consider writing rubrics for each area of the report card, as this would begin to align your assessments to the report card.
2. **Determine the number of levels**: The more levels, the more accurate the score. However, the more levels, the more complex it is to understand. You may want to consider using the number of levels represented on a standards-based report card (four).
3. **Determine the criteria:** If there is more than one learning goal or criterion within the standard, you will want to specify one or more targets. For example, a writing standard includes multiple criteria, such as organization, content, mechanics, and so on. Other standards may be less comprehensive and include only one criterion.
4. **Describe the levels of achievement:** Start with one criterion, and write statements that describe what students achieve when they have met the standard. This becomes language for level 3. Pay particular attention to the verbs in the standard as this is what should be reflected at level 3; this is where we want all students to achieve.

If you have student work available, it is best to look at samples. First, order the samples from best to worst. Then, write statements that describe attributes of the work; describe what's there versus what is not. This will help keep your rubric framed positively.

Then, describe levels 2 and 1, which represent the basic knowledge that students need to achieve the standard. In this case, you might want to look at student work that reflects a 1 or 2 and describe what is present.

Finally, describe what this learning looks like at its more complex level, or level 4. At this stage, it should describe higher levels of thinking and what students are doing or how they are using this learning.

Criteria	Advancing	Achieving	Approaching	Beginning

Source: Adapted from Dimich, N. (2024). Design in Five: Essential phases to create engaging assessment practice *(2nd ed.). Solution Tree Press.*